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ABSTRACT

This position paper details the AFT's opposition to vertical staffing patterns which create salary differentials based on different "levels" of responsibility and thus foster disunity among teachers. It supports, rather, the concept of horizontally differentiated roles and responsibilities, which bases extra salaries upon the union principle of extra pay for extra work, e.g., supervision of interns or committee work. In support of this position, two examples are cited of differentiated staffing programs developed AFT locals. The first program, Career in the Classroom, was developed by the New York City union and funded under the USOE School Personnel Utilization Program of the Bureau of Educational Personnel Development. The program calls for the creation of a wide range of positions, from paraprofessional to adjunct professor. The second program, at a high school in suburban Minneapolis, has also developed a horizontally differentiated staff which includes clerical teacher aides, teacher interns and assistants, teachers, and team leaders. The AFT is working to implement a differentiated staffing program in three New Jersey school districts. (RT)

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TO: Bureau of Educational Personnel Development (USOE)

FROM: American Federation of Teachers (AFL-CIO)

... Submitted by Dr. Robert Bhaerman
Director of Research, AFT

AMERICAN FEDERATION OF TEACHERS' STATEMENT ON VERTICAL STAFFING

March, 1971

The A.F.T. position on differentiated staffing is summarized in the following resolution passed by its Executive Council:

Vertical Staffing:

Whereas, vertical staffing patterns (sometimes called "differentiated staffing") threaten to become a common administrative practice in U.S. education, and

Whereas, vertical staffing patterns create a hierarchy of salary ("levels" of job responsibilities commensurate with a rate of pay), status and authority, and thus tend to destroy the cooperative and communal effort necessary for a successful teaching effort, and

Whereas, vertical staffing patterns create arbitrary and artificial "levels" of responsibility in terms of salary differentials and thus result in a new version of the merit salary system, and

Whereas, vertical staffing patterns create a divisiveness within the teaching staff and are of dubious value in improving the learning process among students; therefore, be it

Resolved, that the AFT go on record as opposing any vertical staffing patterns which reduce the total number of fully certificated staff responsible for the education of pupils, which results in an arbitrary reduction of financing for education, and which is a movement away from the concept of the single salary schedule, and, be it further

Resolved, that any plan dealing with staff utilization must be developed in consonance with the teachers union through the process of negotiations in all phases of decision-making in matters of policy and process, and be it further

Resolved, that all AFT locals investigate thoroughly any and all plans promulgated by school districts which violate the above precepts.

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The resolution is based upon the following eight tenets:

(1) We hold that it is imperative to distinguish between the concept of "differentiated staffing" (differentiated roles and responsibilities) and the concept of "verticalism" (the creation of a hierarchy of authority, salary and status). While we support the former, we reject the latter. We hold that teaching must be viewed as a cooperative and communal effort.

(2) We hold that the concept of verticalism is a negative strategy in that it tends to destroy the single salary schedule and injects a new version of merit salary which is equally abhorrent to classroom teachers, namely, that "levels" of responsibility can be distinguished in terms of salary differentials.

(3) We hold that the single salary schedule must be maintained. Significant increases in salary should be the means by which teachers are attracted to and retained in the profession.

(4) We hold that differentiated roles and responsibilities on a horizontal basis, that is, with salaries based on experience and education, implies the use of such positive elements as flexible staff assignment, individualized in-service programs, cooperative team approaches, interdisciplinary curriculum, cross-age grouping and the like. We hold that these innovations can be achieved without the encroachment of verticalism.

(5) We hold that the arbitrary designation of vertical levels between specialists and generalists, one group of specialists and another, or any personnel designated on such ladders as "master" teacher,

"senior" teacher, and "staff" teacher leads to divisiveness in the schools and should be rejected.

(6) We hold that the concept of horizontally differentiated roles and responsibilities is consistent with the union principle of Extra Pay For Extra Work. This does not assume the inflexible levels common to most vertical models. We reject the attempt at institutionalizing, rigidifying, and bureaucratizing staff utilization patterns. The union alternative, Extra Pay For Extra Work, bases extra salaries upon the performance of additional tasks (e.g., supervision of interns, committee work, teaching in-service courses) rather than upon designated, locked-in "levels" of responsibility. Since these extra jobs may vary from time to time, rigid ladders of any kind are rejected.

(7) We hold that, within the context of collective bargaining, we will support legitimate experimentation and comprehensive research into all patterns of staff utilization.

(8) We hold that so-called educational solutions which are of dubious value in encouraging the learning process among students, or which create more problems than they are intended to resolve, or which promote divisiveness in the teaching ranks are not worthy of our support.

The American Federation of Teachers seeks to differentiate between the concepts of verticalism and differentiation. Furthermore, we seek to humanize and vitalize education and therefore, to the greatest extent possible, we seek to individualize both the instruction of students and the utilization of staff. To meet these ends, several AFT locals have

developed their own staff differentiation programs. Two main examples will illustrate, one from the largest local union in the country and the other from a small mid-western, suburban district.

The United Federation of Teachers, Local #2 in New York, has developed a program through the cooperative efforts of the UFT, District 2 in lower Manhattan, and New York University. The plan which is called Career in the Classroom has been funded by the United States Office of Education under the guidelines of the School Personnel Utilization (differentiated staffing) program of the Bureau of Educational Personnel Development.

The New York City project was developed to deal with two specific problems which were encountered in the local district: (1) that teachers were not being trained by practicing professionals on the college level; and (2) that elementary school teachers were, in the main, supervised by administrators who were not practicing professionals and who had no elementary teaching experience.

The Career in the Classroom plan approved as a School Personnel Utilization project calls for (a) the creation of the position of adjunct professor from the school, immediate area, or district where the program was to be instituted and (b) specific job description for family and community workers, instructional staff from para-professionals to the licensed teacher, clerical and technical staff and, of course, the position of adjunct teacher.

The program provides for two such adjunct positions: one adjunct professor with a great amount of experience in teaching training, and the other a subject matter specialist who has primary responsibility for coordinating the work of teachers. The plan also calls for the establishment of an

Instructional Teacher Committee -- a planning group -- consisting of school administrative staff, key teachers, parent representatives and para-professionals. Jointly, they are to formulate broad objective criteria for establishing the committee which has begun to implement the program.

Local #872, the Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers in suburban Minneapolis, also has developed a differentiated staffing program at the Neil Armstrong Senior High School. The initiative and momentum for the plan was provided by the local teacher's union. The plan, in the words of the union teachers who are implementing it, establishes a staff pattern of "teachers who do teaching," teacher assistants and interns who check tests, correct papers, and the like," "teacher aides," and "a team leader, who is paid no more, to give instruction and direction to the aide and clerical staff." The union teachers report: "We do evaluate one another, but we've done it in team teaching. We seem to be happy under this program, so far. We have control of it, and if it doesn't work, we will end it. It is a horizontal plan, a plan the union helped to write." Similarly, Local #1182 in nearby Bloomington, Minnesota, has established a differentiation program at Oak Grove Junior High School, in which, again, there are no pay differentials and the teachers have a major voice in the control of the plan.

On the national level, the AFT-QuEST project called "The Union, the School, The University: a cooperative venture in continuing teach education" illustrates in a concrete way our national "working view" on the issue of differentiated staffing. With the cooperation of several faculty

members from the Graduate School of Education, Rutgers-The State University, we are implementing "the paradigm for accountability" (AFT QuEST Paper #12) in three New Jersey school districts. In essence, the project is attempting to weld together and put into proper focus three separate elements: (1) constructive, positive, and non-punitive evaluation of teachers, (2) individualized, personalized and continuous in-service education, and (3) differentiated roles and responsibilities of teachers.

The project is based upon the assumption that since teachers continuously grow and change, patterns of staff utilization must be kept as flexible as possible. The design of the project can be stated in any of the three ways:

- That the analysis and assessment of teachers lead to the establishment of self-growth programs for teachers and be based upon the specific roles which teachers are performing at any given time.

- That the continuous progress of teachers be based upon the analysis and assessment of their strengths and weaknesses and, in turn, lead to flexibility in their utilization.

- That the assignment and deployment of teachers be based upon their unique assessed needs and upon their individualized on-going, self-development programs.

Surely none of the three elements will be easy to achieve: non-punitive evaluation, individualized in-service education, or differentiated assignments without the hierarchy. Of the three, the latter may be the most difficult to attain. That is because it will have to take some deep soul searching and perhaps a new mind-set on the part of most educators, both teachers and administrators, in overcoming the entrepreneur mentality which is becoming so prevalent in today's educational scene.

In summary, union teachers are seeking innovative solutions to staffing problems throughout the country, but they are doing so in ways which are appropriate to the local situation. They are forming differentiated staffing study committees, they are reading, they are visiting other schools, and they are developing plans and programs. They seem to be saying: "Differentiation? Yes. Verticalism? No."

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